

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Michigan vs LSU

Saturday, March 18, 2023

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

## LSU Tigers

## Coach Kim Mulkey

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We will open up the floor for questions for Coach Mulkey.

**Q. Coach, obviously Michigan, you mentioned Michigan's size on the perimeter last night and then you also mentioned they play bigger line-ups. What goes into that decision for you and how you assess Michigan's size?**

COACH MULKEY: Watching them play, watching lots of film. Skill level; what we try to do defensively. Is it a good matchup if we go big? Is it a better matchup if we go small? Who is in the game for them? They don't play more than 7 or 8 players. We don't play more than 7 or 8 players. I think matchups on the defensive end will dictate a lot of that.

**Q. Coach, we talked about offense just now. Defensively what kind of problems does Michigan cause for y'all?**

COACH MULKEY: They are big. Their point guard, Brown, she played the off guard, I guess three years. I know last time we played she was an off guard. Now she's a point guard. That's big up there. They are 6'3", 6'1". I looked at the entire roster, they have two kids under 6 feet. And we're not talking big like 6'7", like South Carolina, 6'5", just solid 6 foot and bigger and we don't have that kind of size. So that means they are going to contest a lot of shots, they are going to rebound the ball hard, they are going to be physical, they are going to mix their defenses.

**Q. Can you kind of match that with your speed?**

COACH MULKEY: I'm small. You know, I used to get aggravated at my coach when they would talk about big. And I always had a comeback to that. I guess that's what small people do. Certainly speed can counteract being big.



And hopefully, we'll have some advantages in that area. I think more so than big, and small, and speed, I think the biggest thing that is not written. Look at their lineup. Fifth-year senior, fifth-year senior, fifth-year senior, senior, grad transfer, junior. They have been together a while, and they play like it. They know every move each of them makes, and you can just tell as a coach they just run a little bit more smooth. And when things don't go too good they figure out a way to get out of it, whether it's a turnover or a trap or something that catches them off guard. And that's just confidence from having played a lot of games together.

**Q. Coach Mulkey, facing this Michigan team it's the only team in the country with three girls that are averaging at least 16 points. You talked about the size there, but defensively, what's it going to take for y'all to obviously --**

COACH MULKEY: I said this when the bracket came out, not that anybody cares, but Michigan is better than a 6-seed. Just two or three weeks ago, if y'all kept up with it, I remember them being talked about as a host. Well, what happened? I don't know. They are that good. They average just about the same number of points in conference that we do. The same number of 3's. They shoot about the same number of 3's. They get to the foul line just about the same number we do. It's just going to be a very very good matchup. The difference is we have maybe a little bit more speed, they have more height. What is it going to take? It's going to take just grinding. It's not going to be a game where -- I don't think it's just going to be entertaining where we're going to see 120. It's going to be two teams getting after it on both ends of the floor.

**Q. Kim, upon reflection of last night's game, did you feel like maybe it was a little bit nerves and, you know, poor shooting, the bad shooting and --**

COACH MULKEY: I wouldn't say it was nerves. And we didn't go back and talk about it. As a team, you just can't do that at this stage of the year. If I just had to say what I thought it was, I think it's just a little rust. We hadn't played since what? The Tennessee game. What date was that? The 4th. And what's today? It's been two weeks. I think it's probably a little bit more than that. You can simulate a

scrimmage in practice, which is what we did during that time span. But I don't think it was nerves. I really don't.

**Q. You mentioned last night, the rebounding wasn't as dominant as maybe you would liked. Were you able to go back and see anything?**

COACH MULKEY: I don't go back and watch anything. I stayed up in my bed and just focused on everything I could watch on Michigan while Bob and Kaylin and the rest of the crew were doing things in the office. I had family in town, so I wait until it gets real quiet, and then I can lay there and just think. And then we put our thought process together and come up with a game plan in the film room for about an hour today. And physical, they are physical. I think we're physical. They are talented. I think we're talented. If I told you one advantage I thought they had over us, I think it's just the poise and maturity of being an older team. And that's not to take away that they are not as talented. I'm telling you something that they have that's very obvious that we don't have.

**Q. Coach, you have mentioned wanting to win one more game a year ago that would put you in a position to go to the Sweet 16. What would the significance of the program mean in terms of where you are trying to build and progress?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I think it's that next step. You want to do better than the previous year. And I think in all aspects of what we have done in two years we have done one more thing than we did the previous year. This would be that one more thing that last year's team didn't get to do. But that doesn't mean if I come in here tomorrow and we don't win the game that we're heading in the wrong direction. It would be a disappointment, but it's not -- how do I say this? We're heading in the right direction. This would just be another stepping stone that we've stepped on.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to ask you about Emily Kiser. Last night she had 18, 10, 6. What challenges does her skill bring?**

COACH MULKEY: Double-double. She can score the ball. They really do a good job defending the post. They move their feet, they three-quarter you. They don't front, but they will if they need to. They are very physical. And they make it very hard for you to get touches in there. I said to you about the maturity and being older, but the one thing that people, unless you're in this sport and really watch it, for them to be that big, they push the ball. Our transition defense is going to have to be extremely good. And that goes back to your question about when do you go with your big lineup. If I have my big lineup are they going to

match up in transition? They push the ball. If you just watch every possession, they are looking to go. Five of them are looking to run. It's not blazing speed, but it's at a good pace. And she's one of the ones that runs. At her size, they get down the floor. We like to run, but it's a different kind of transition than what they do. And that's a concern is transition defense.

**Q. Couple of quick things about Michigan. In terms of rebounding, their guards seem very active in that area, or at least were yesterday. And the other thing is Alexis seemed kind of inspired by watching their hustle plays where they were diving on the floor with reckless abandon. She loved seeing that. How do you think those two things stood out in their game yesterday, and how are you kind of preparing your team to deal with it?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, I'll say the one diving play was when Brown was behind the UN LV player on a loose ball that was going into the backcourt, half-court area and she knew she couldn't get to it by running to catch up to her. And she just dove. And the ball went out of bounds. I showed that to the team. So Alexis is very aware of it. She just watched it. The rebounding area, your guards should get more rebounds, particularly yesterday for us because they shot 30 something 3's. Most misses are coming long. I can't really tell you Michigan's -- I didn't just evaluate did they get a lot of long rebounds because UNLV shoots a lot of threes. They are big. They are big. So they are going to get rebounds. They are going to take their point guard and post her up some. She's big. So our rebounding from the guard spot, we got to be tougher. Maybe that's a good word. We got to be tougher tomorrow. Got to be tougher at all positions tomorrow.

**Q. You've had three NCAA Tournament games. Now that you are hosting the atmosphere and the attendance has been pretty good. Maybe tomorrow it doesn't seem to be any kind of conflict or parades or anything like that. The students classes back in Monday. So you're probably hoping for a good attendance. But what kind of lift do you hope to get from the crowd tomorrow?**

COACH MULKEY: Well, you are always wanting the crowd to help us. You'll see me do that at different stages of the game meaning we're tired, we need a lift. We need y'all's help. The lift yesterday came when Alexis Morris scored a couple buckets there. She scored on the inbound. We were up. But for some reason, fans have those that they like, I guess. And I guess they just wanted to see Alexis relax and hit a bucket. And that was encouraging. You want to play at home. It doesn't guarantee you wins. But you want to play at home, you want to sleep in your

own bed, you want to have your own routine. But you have those programs that honestly do better on the road. They get away from distractions. And I would think Michigan's Big 10 has prepared them for this moment. Or their team's got the host, I think. They are really, really having a good year in the Big 10. And so they are prepared. But what prepared them more than this year was all those years those players have played together.

**Q. They are a number 6 seed. Based on the way they played yesterday, they lost three out of four coming in.**

COACH MULKEY: Who did they lose to?

**Q. They lost to some good teams first of all. Including Ohio State. Relative to what you have expected over the years from a 6 seed how do they compare?**

COACH MULKEY: They are good. They are good. My opinion, which does not matter, is they are better than a 6 seed. That's just my opinion. I know they finished tied for fifth in their league. Two or three weeks ago they were being talked about as possibly hosting. So that tells you how good they are, if they were in the conversation of being one of the 16.

**Q. One thing that UNLV said that Michigan did was throw waves at their post player. And Angel was talking about Michigan's depth. How do you see that playing out in your matchup tomorrow?**

COACH MULKEY: Waves. Are you talking about waves of bodies?

**Q. Yeah.**

COACH MULKEY: How many did they truly play yesterday? Have you looked at the stats? I only saw 7 get double-figure minutes. So I don't know about waves. We play 8. I guess our wave better be bigger than their wave, right? When I think of waves, I think of 10, 11, 12 players coming at you. Usually, you have about 8, 9 kids that really play significant minutes. And I look at stuff like that. And if I remember -- correct me if I'm wrong -- I really only thought I saw about 7 get the most minutes yesterday. Now they had maybe 3 more that got 4 minutes or maybe 7 minutes and stuff like that. But truly it was about 7. If I'm wrong, I stand corrected. I have many faults, but being wrong is just not one of them. But, you know -- that's a joke. Tongue and cheek, guys. Yeah. See you Kiser had 38, almost 49. Williams had right at 16. Nolan, 37-something. Phelia, she just came back from injury, 32. Brown, 36. Stuck, 22. And then Hobbs had 11. How many is that? 7. So I don't know, you know, what she was talking about waves. The only other two that played had 4 minutes

and 1 and a half minutes. So there may have been rotating a lot. Using different people. But yeah...

**Q. Coach, thank you for your time. Best of luck.**